Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 IO-13 MCT-01 CU-02 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /074 W
----------112857 281728Z /46
R 281255Z JUNE 77
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4370

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 9203

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION NEW DELHI FROM CALCUTTA
DATED JUNE 28 REPT TO YOU FOR ACTION

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CALCUTTA 1530

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IN
SUBJECT: RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS

REF: NEW DELHI 8910

1. AS PROMISED DURING THE STATE ASSEMBLY CAMPAIGN, THE NEW CHIEF MINISTER OF WEST BENGAL, JOYOTI BASUE, HAS MADE THE RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS, INCLUDING NAXALITES, ONE OF HIS FIRST ORDERS OF BUSINESS. SOME POLITICAL PRISONERS HAD ALREADY BEEN RLEASED AFTER THE FORMATION OF THE JANATA GOVERNMENT IN DELHI, BUT WE HAVE HEARD FROM SENIOR MEMBERS OF CALCUTTA POLICE FORCE OVER THIS WEEKEND THAT NOW ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS ARE TO BE RELEASED. THIS WILL IN-
CLUDE NAXALITES WHO HAVE BEEN TRIED, FOUND GUILTY AND SEN-
TENCED TO LONG TERMS OF RIGOROUS IMPRISONMENT FOR PREMEDI-
TATED MURDER. POLICE SOURCES ARE NOT SURE HOW MANY POLITICAL PRISONERS HAVE ALREADY BEEN RELEASED SINCE MANY COMMON
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CRIMINALS ARE STATING THAT THEY ARE NAXALITES TO GET OUT OF PRISON.

2. ANANDA BAZAR OF JUNE 26 STATES THAT THERE ARE 718 POLITICAL PRISONERS STILL HELD IN WEST BENGAL, OF WHICH FIVE HUNDRED ARE NAXALITES OF THE 718, 74 ARE REPORTEDLY MISA

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DETAINEES, 281 CONVICTED PRISONERS AND 426 UNDER TRIAL.
OFFICERS ADVISE THAT THERE ARE ARE SPECIAL LEGAL DIFFICULTIES
IN RELEASING NAXALITES WHO ARE UNDER TRIAL, UNDER PRISON
SENTENCE, OR WANTED IN OTHER STATES. IN THESE CASES THE
GOVERNMENT MUST OBTAIN RESPECTIVELY PERMISSION OF THE
COURT, A PARDON OR AGREEMENT FROM THE CONCERNED STATES.
NEVERTHELESS POLICE SOURCES ALL EXPECT THE NAXALITES TO BE
RELEASED IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE. ONE SOURCE STATES THAT 70
PERCENT OF THE NAXALITES AND ALMOST ALL OTHER POLITICAL
PRISONERS HAVE BEEN RELEASED.

3. POLICE AUTORITIES ARE CONCERNED BY THE RELEASE OF THE
NAXALITES AND STATE THAT THE RECENT OUTBREAK OF ROBBERY AND
LOOTING ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF CALCUTTA IS A DIRECT RESULT OF
THEIR RELEASE. WHILE POLICE AUTHORITIES NOTE THAT THE NAX-
ALITES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ONLY AN OCCASSIONAL ROBBERY,
LOCAL POLICE ARE WARY OF INTERFERING IN ORDINARY CRIMINAL
ACTIVITY BECAUSE OF POSSIBLE NAXALITE INVOLVEMENT. ONE
SENIOR POLICE OFFICER WHO WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN SUPPRESSING
THE NAXALITES TOLD CONOFF THAT THE NAXALITE ORGANIZATION
WAS STILL SHAKEN BY ITS LACK OF LEADERSHIP AND THE INFUSTION
OF RADICAL NAXALITES WHO HAD BEEN RECENTLY RELASED FROM
PRISON. HE WAS OBVIOUSLY DISTURBED BY A RECENT CALCUTTA
POLICE INTELLIGENCE BRANCH REPORT THAT THE NAXALITES WERE
ORGANIZING IN AND AROUND JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY, WHERE STUDENTS
WERE SAID TO BE "UNSETTLED."

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4. WHILE CHIEF MINISTER HAS STATED THAT CPOLITICAL
VIOLENCE WILL NOT RPT NOT BE TOLERATED, POLICE SOURCES ARE
CONCERNED THAT HE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO CONTROL THE RADICAL
ELEMENTS WITHIN THE NAXALITS AND THAT BECAUSE OF LACK OF
CONFIDENCE IN THE MINISTRY, THE LOCAL POLICE THEMSELVES
MAY BE UNWILLING TO ACT AGAINST THE NAXALITES.LIEBOWITH
UNQUOTE
GOHEEN

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NNN

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a
*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL PRISONERS, PRISONERS RELEASE, PROVINCE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 28-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977NEWDE09203
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: n/a
Expiration:
Film Number: D770230-1073
Format: TEL
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t197706107/aaaafxbz.tel
Line Count: 107
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON MICROFILM, TEXT ON-LINE
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Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 NEW DELHI 8910
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2008214
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> mcm 970909
Subject: RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS
TAGS: PINS, IN, PINT
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d50b9e73-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
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Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009